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## THE DRAMATIC ART OF MENANDER

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### I. *The Nature of the plots*<sup>1</sup>

THE first impression which the recently discovered fragments of Menander arouse in the modern reader, touched as he is with the prevalent craze for originality, is likely to be one of monotony. The plots are so similar to one another and to those of the Plautine and Terentian adaptations of the New Comedy that not only may they all

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<sup>1</sup> I use as examples not only the papyrus fragments of Menander, but also, as far as seems to me justifiable, the Latin adaptations from the several Greek poets. For the sake of convenience, so that I shall not have to state the derivation each time that I mention a play, I catalogue at once the known imitations by Plautus and Terence that are germane to my purpose.

(a) Menander. The imitations by Terence: —

Εὐνοῦχος . . . . .	Chaerea plot of <i>Eunuchus</i> ,
Κόλαξ . . . . .	Phaedria plot of <i>Eunuchus</i> ,
Ἀνδρία	} . . . . . coalescing in the <i>Andria</i> ,
Περὶνθία	
Ἀδελφοί . . . . .	<i>Adelphi</i> ,
Ἐαυτὸν τιμωρούμενος . . . . .	Comedy of the same name.

The imitations by Plautus, none of them certain, but all of a greater or less degree of probability: —

Δὺς ἐξαπατῶν . . . . .	<i>Bacchides</i> ,
Καρχηδόnius . . . . .	<i>Poenulus</i> ,
Φιλᾶδελφοί . . . . .	<i>Stichus</i> ,
Δύσκολος . . . . .	<i>Aulularia</i> ,
?	<i>Cistellaria</i> .

(b) Philemon. All the imitations are by Plautus: —

Ἐμπορος . . . . .	<i>Mercator</i> ,
Θησαυρός . . . . .	<i>Trinummus</i> ,
Φάσμα . . . . .	<i>Mostellaria</i> (probably).

(c) Diphilus. The imitations by Plautus: —

Κληρούμενοι . . . . .	<i>Casina</i> ,
?	<i>Rudens</i> ,
Ὀναγός . . . . .	<i>Asinaria</i> , if the name Demophilus in the prologue should be read Diphilus.

The imitations by Terence: —

Συναποθνήσκοντες . . . . .	Abduction scene of <i>Adelphi</i> .
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The Latin plays are so familiar that I have not thought it necessary each time in the article to designate Plautus or Terence as the author.

be reduced to the same fundamental formula, but the terms of the formula admit little elasticity. The formula is simple: a man and a woman, in their desire to be united in love, meet and conquer certain obstacles. If algebraically we represent the separated couple by  $x - y$ , the obstacles by  $z$ , and the mode of overcoming the obstacles by  $w$ , we may express the plot by  $w \left( \frac{x - y}{z} \right) = x + y$ : the man and woman,  $x - y$ , divided by  $z$ , when brought under the operation of a certain manner of rescue,  $w$ , are joined as  $x + y$ . The equation itself might not be so productive of monotony, since a liberal variation in the interpretation of the unknown quantities would result in almost infinite diversity. The majority of modern comedies and novels could be so expressed, but the astounding thing is that Menander and his contemporaries restricted themselves to so few variations of terms. It is only necessary to recall the comedies of Shakspeare, Sheridan, and Pinero, or the novels of Dickens, Thackeray, and Meredith, in order to realize the universality of the formula and at the same time the numberless opportunities for diversity within these limits; Trollope is less broad in his scope, confining himself largely for the term  $z$ , the obstacle, to a disparity in social station, though he changes the other members of the formula more freely, and relies for success upon his peerless delineation of character.

The New Comedy is much narrower than Trollope. From the vast complexity of Hellenic life in the fourth and third centuries, for the lover was chosen ordinarily the typical Athenian youth. Occasionally, he is in the prime of life, like Demeas of Menander's *Samia*, a soldier, like Polemon, in his *Periceirromene*, or a slave, as in Plautus's *Persa*. The beloved girl may be freeborn or a courtesan. In a modern comedy, since any of these types might be widely differentiated, especially by the introduction of psychological subtleties unknown to the purer sculptural form of ancient drama, dulness could be averted even within this prescribed circle; but the cast of the New Comedy was composed of stock characters, who were marked with the same traits in each play. The minus sign of the formula stands either for the separation or the attempt at the separation of a pair of lovers, or, as in the *Menaechmi* and the *Stichus*, for the estrangement of man and wife. Of the obstacles the most popular form is that of a mistake, causing jealousy in one

of the pair. In Menander's *Epitrepontes*, Charisius abandons his bride, laboring under the delusion that the child she has borne is not his own ; in the *Periceiomene*, Polemon ejects Glycera from his home, ignorant that the man whom he has seen embracing her is her brother ; in the *Samia*, Demeas interprets falsely his concubine's fond attention to an infant. In the *Adelphi* of Terence, it is the maiden Pamphila whose jealousy is stirred through a mistaken belief that her betrothed, Aeschinus, who has taken upon himself the sins of his brother, is carrying on a flirtation with a music-girl. The mistake that constitutes the obstacle may involve no jealousy, as in Menander's lost *Phasma*,<sup>1</sup> where the youth was kept from the maiden because he considered her the apparition of a goddess ; or the difficulty may lie in mistaken identity, as in the *Menaechmi*, where the husband is estranged from both wife and mistress through confusion with his twin-brother. Another very common impediment is social inequality, discriminating against union with an hetaera or with a virtuous maiden of lower caste or slender means. The source of trouble may also be, as in the *Aulularia*, the niggardliness of a parent, or, as in the *Pseudolus*, the avarice of a procurer, who demands an exorbitant sum beyond the lover's resources. A final and frequent obstacle is rivalry, usually on the part of a boastful captain, but sometimes on the part of the lad's rakish old father, as in the *Mercator* and *Casina*.

The extrication from the imbroglio is managed in one of three ways : by the rectification of the mistake, by the recognition of the indigent maiden or despised courtesan as a long lost and well-born daughter, or by the schemes of a slave or parasite, within the small field of which the poet of the New Comedy had perhaps his best opportunity for invention. Additional variation may be procured through a combination of obstacles, or, as in the *Poenulus* and *Epidicus*, where the dénouement is effected both by the ruses of a slave and by recognition, through a combination of modes of overcoming them. One has only to cast his eye over the motley prospect of contemporary drama to understand that countless other changes were possible, but all the plots of the New Comedy of which we have any adequate knowledge are included within the meagre boundaries that I have outlined.

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<sup>1</sup> The plot is sketched by a scholiast, perhaps Donatus, on the *Eunuchus* of Terence, 9.

There is even a further and almost perverse narrowness in the choice in one comedy of the same series of characters, obstacles, and dénouements that occur in another, until the plots are often almost identical. The close parallelism of the *Hecyra* of Apollodorus, appropriated by Terence, to the *Epitrepontes* of Menander was noted as early as the days of Apollinaris Sidonius,<sup>1</sup> and the *Cistellaria*, which is possibly of Menandrian origin, is only very slightly removed. There are striking analogies between the *Mercator*, derived from Philemon, and the *Casina*, from Diphilus, and between the *Persa* and the *Poenulus*; the *Pseudolus* and the *Curculio* are peas of the same pod. The fusion of two Greek originals into one, the famous "contaminatio" of Terence, was rendered more feasible by these similarities, and he himself alludes to the exact resemblance of Menander's *Andria* and *Perinthia*.<sup>2</sup> Even when the similarity is not extended through the whole play, there is a great monotony of detail in the wearisome repetition of the same devices and situations. The mythological travesties that occasionally appear in the poets of this period are no exceptions, because they are not real New Comedies but relics of the matter of the Middle Comedy. Menander's nearest approach to such parody, the *Leucadia*, a humorous treatment of the half legendary tale of Phaon, the plot of which may be partially gleaned from a note of Servius<sup>3</sup> and from what is known of the Latin work of the same name by Sextus Turpilius, may even be reduced to the formula. The young couple are separated by the obstacle of rivalry in the person of Phaon, an aged ferryman, metamorphosed into a handsome youth by Aphrodite in reward for her free transportation under the disguise of an old hag, and furthermore endowed by her with a love-charm, so that he has become the darling of the other sex. It is not evident how the obstacle was removed. Since the maiden, in the despair of her unrequited affection for Phaon, cast herself from the Leucadian rock only to be rescued by her constant swain, it is possible that in gratitude she returned to her former love; but if a change of heart was caused only by the final restoration of Phaon to his natural shape, then the impediment would be overcome in the ordinary fashion by the rectification of the mistake. The ultimate impression of the New Comedy, despite Antiphanes's exaltation of its invention above that of

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<sup>1</sup> *Epist.* 4, 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Andria*, 9 ff.

<sup>3</sup> To Verg. *Aen.* 3, 219.

tragedy, which draws upon the store of mythology,<sup>1</sup> is even more unrelieved than that of classic Italian opera, although, fortunately, the similarity of plot does not result in so ludicrously small a vocabulary.

Menander evidently permitted himself even less freedom than the law allowed. The term  $\gamma$  very regularly belongs to the class of Hetaerae, liaisons with whom Martial<sup>2</sup> seems to have believed that he introduced upon the stage with his *Thais*. Suidas, to be sure, ascribed to his predecessor of the Middle Comedy, Anaxandrides, the invention of the amorous intrigue,<sup>3</sup> but Menander may have extended it to the *demi-monde*. Of the newly recovered plays, the *Periceirumene* and the *Samia* have as feminine protagonists women so low in the social scale that they can enter upon nothing higher than the relation of concubinage. In the plays that are known from Terence, the "leading lady" was a courtesan in the *Andria* and *Perinthia*, in the *Colax*, furnishing the Phaedria motive of the *Eunuchus*, and the *Eunuchus*, furnishing the Chaerea motive of the same comedy, and in the *Heautontimorumenus*; in the *Adelphi*, one of the two prominent feminine figures practises the same trade. Of the five Plautine dramas that are possibly Menandrian, a like arrangement is observed in the *Bacchides*, *Poenulus*, and *Cistellaria*. Menander also confines the term  $\omega$  within a narrow circle: the extrication from obstacles by recognition seems to have been his special predilection, and it is possible that it was actually he who transferred the *ἀναγνώρισις* from tragedy to comedy.<sup>4</sup> It is found in the four comedies of the Cairo manuscript, probably in the *Georgus*,<sup>5</sup> and in at least half of the plays that are known through Latin adaptations, — the *Andria*, *Perinthia*, *Eunuchus*, *Heautontimorumenus*, *Poenulus*, and *Cistellaria*. Inasmuch, however, as the Cairo manuscript may contain a particular selection of comedies of the recognition type, if we could recover all the work of Menander, the proportion might possibly not be so great.

The comic poets, then, evidently set very slight value upon originality. Such, indeed, was the general attitude of antiquity and even of modern

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Kock, frg. 191.

<sup>2</sup> 14, 187.

<sup>3</sup> *Lexicon*, article on Anaxandrides.

<sup>4</sup> Quintilian (10, 1, 69) observes the special dependence of Menander upon Euripides.

<sup>5</sup> Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Lit.*, vol. II, ed. of 1911, p. 32.

times until after the Renaissance; and it is only the romantic movement and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that have craved novelty. The ideal of the past has been to repeat again and again the same subject until it has achieved perfect expression. The sculptor carves the same deities as his predecessors, the tragic poet utilizes the well-worn myths, the comic writer the familiar intrigues, each impressing upon the old matter his own individuality in the hope that his interpretation may prove the ultimate. What originality antiquity demanded was only in treatment. Actual plagiarism could not have been any more condemned than it was in the Renaissance, if we believe Porphyry that Menander filched bodily the *Οἰωνιστής* of Antiphanes for his *Δεισιδαίμων*.<sup>1</sup> Since the audiences of the fourth and third centuries required originality of substance only in one or two details, the procedure of the comic poet was to take an old plot, to superimpose upon it one or two striking but trifling novelties, and ordinarily to suggest what was new by the title. That this is an adequate definition of a New Comedy is proved by a review of the extant material.

Menander affords many typical examples. The story of the *Epitrepontes* is the familiar quarrel between lovers through a mistake and a solution through recognition, and the innovation consists in the submission to a passerby of a dispute about the possession of certain tokens belonging to an exposed child, so that the play is called, *Those Who Resort to Arbitration*. To virtually the same substance in the *Periceirromene* is added the innovation of the incensed soldier's clipping of his sweetheart's hair, with the consequent title of, *The Girl of The Shorn Locks*. The *Phasma* is named after the curious form which the obstacle of the mistake assumes, the idea that the maiden is merely a vision. The novelty of the *Heautontimorumenus* is the remorseful condition of the father, Menedemus, and the comedy is styled the *Self-tormentor*.<sup>2</sup> Since the interest of the *Adelphi* lies in the dissimilar

<sup>1</sup> Porphyry., quoted by Euseb., *Praep.*, *Ev.* 10, 3, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Colman (*The Comedies of Terence, Translated, etc.*) in his note upon line 7 supposes that the title was more appropriate to the Menandrian prototype, because the character of Menedemus was there thrown into stronger light; but there are absolutely no grounds for assuming this difference between the Greek and Roman plays. He has evidently failed to discern the common practice of naming after a new but subordinate detail.

temperaments of two old brothers and in their effect upon the characters of two young brothers whom they have educated, a title is used which might apply to either or both pairs. Sometimes the innovation is one of emphasis, as is the possibly Menandrian *Stichus*, where, with the old subject of an estrangement between husband and wife through a mistake, in this case the conviction that the husband will not return from his travels, the stress is upon the rôle of the parasite who tries to extract a largess by his good news of the home-coming, and the comedy is therefore called after him. Likewise in the *Georgus* or *Farmer*, the emphasis is upon the kindness of the countryman, Cleaenetus. Certain preserved titles, though the plots are lost, reveal what the new things must have been, — the *Mourner of Himself* (Ἀὐτὸν πενθῶν), in which Kock suggests that a man was falsely believed dead or feigned death, the *Θεοφορουμένη*, in which the novelty was probably the real or supposed prophetic power of the heroine. In the latter instance, as in the *Heautontimorumenus* and the *Adelphi*, the innovation is in the profession or mental condition of one of the characters. Rarely the novelty goes deeper, varying somewhat the algebraic formula. In the *Eunuchus*, which provided one part of Terence's "contaminated" play of the same name, the lad Chaerea himself, and not, as ordinarily, a slave, vanquishes the obstacle to the realization of his love through disguise as a eunuch; the *Colax*, or *Flatterer*, from which the other part of the comedy is drawn, is named, according to the common principle of emphasis, after the parasite who smooths away the difficulties by his soft and specious language. In calling his works after these slight innovations rather than according to the general nature of the plot, Menander aimed at arousing at once the curiosity of his fellow-citizens by piquant titles, just as modern managers demand of playwrights such striking nomenclature as, *What Every Woman Knows*, *When Bunty Pulls the Strings*, or *Mind the Paint, Girl*.<sup>1</sup>

The procedure of the other poets of the New Comedy was analogous. The *Mostellaria*,<sup>2</sup> if it is derived from the *Phasma* of Philemon, is named both in Greek and Latin from the curious mode of conquering the

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps the necessity of a striking title that Antiphanes has in mind when he mentions *ὀνόματα καινά* as one of the elements of comic invention; cf. Kock, frg. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Mostellaria* is an adjective formed upon *mostellum*, which is a diminutive of *mostrum*, a prodigy.



obstacle to the young profligate's enjoyment of his mistress, — the slave's pretence to the father that the house in which the scenes of debauchery are occurring is haunted. In the *Thesaurus* of Philemon, adapted by Plautus in the *Trinummus*, the threadbare tale of the separation of two lovers by the mistake of thinking that they have no money, the innovation is the emphasis upon the kindness of the friend who secretly preserves for them a treasure, from which, however, and not in the usual fashion from the person emphasized, it gets its title. Plautus, breaking the rule even more violently, finds a name in the very subordinate detail of a sharper's remuneration. The *Clerumenoe* of Diphilus, reflected in the *Casina*, receives its title from the peculiar episode in which the rival son and sire cast lots for the possession of the shameless heroine; but although the surprise is centered in this and the other modes employed to outwit the amorous father, the Roman poet, departing again from Greek usage, calls the comedy after the bone of contention, *Casina*. The novelty may be in the mere setting of the play, as in the *Rudens*, drawn from an unknown comedy of Diphilus, where the common subject of the separation of two lovers by a procurer's avarice has as a background the shore upon which the leno and his white slaves have been wrecked; but Plautus names it after the additional innovation, the rope, by which is extracted from the sea the casket of tokens that cause the recognition. Apollodorus obtained his title, the *Epidicazomenus*, for the original of the *Phormio*, from the chief trick of the parasite, the pretence of bringing suit; Terence calls it after the parasite himself. Since the invention of the poet is so often directed towards the devices of the slave or parasite, the comedy is frequently named either from one of his new tricks, as the *Mostellaria* and *Epidicazomenus*, or, on the rule of emphasis, from the rogue himself, as the *Phormio*, the *Epidicus*, the *Pseudolus*, and the *Curculio*. In the *Truculentus*, as in Menander's *Eunuchus*, the novelty provokes a slight change in the usual formula, the adroitness occurring in the person, not of a slave, but of the courtesan, Phronesium, who hoodwinks three different suitors, but inasmuch as there is a certain freshness about the figure of the boorish serf, Strabax, the work is styled the *Churl*. I have not mentioned all the known plots, but an examination of the others will demonstrate that, with the important exception of the *Captivi*, they may be brought

within the scheme of originality and nomenclature that I have outlined. The *Captivi* is the only New Comedy of utterly novel plot, approximating rather a recognition drama of the Euripidean type, and Plautus, realizing the sameness of the ordinary run of comedies, plumes himself at length in the prologue upon its uniqueness.

The effervescent imagination and the unflagging invention that constitute so much of the charm of Aristophanes had gone the same downward road as the rest of Periclean vigor and enthusiasm. For this loss of freshness of spirit the Middle Comedy had substituted parody of mythology and burlesque of tragedy and philosophy; for the originality of the Old Comedy the New Comedy employs as a partial substitute complication of plot. Were knowledge of the genre restricted to the Terentian repertoire, the complication would appear greater than is actually true, and it is necessary to remember that here two Greek originals coalesce into one. Some comedies are simple enough, — the possibly Menandrian *Stichus*, and especially those the essence of which is the trickery of a slave, the *Persa*, the *Curculio*, and the like; but a general review of the extant material and especially of the newly discovered Menander proves that the Athenians of this period relished intricacy. The obscurity is often due to the mistake, which constitutes the pivot of action, in Menander usually the mistaken identity, which is removed by the recognition, but occasionally, as in Terence, there are two interlaced strains. From the four plays of the Cairo manuscript, the only example is the *Samia*, which recounts the difficulties of two pairs of lovers. Another source of confusion is the incessant prevarication of slaves, so that it is hard for the audience itself to follow the real condition of affairs. In the desperately complicated *Epidicus*, all these causes of perplexity at their worst are combined: not only are there two couples, Stratippocles enamoured of a captive whom he does not know to be his half-sister Telestis, and a Captain enamoured of a music-girl, Acropolistis, but Stratippocles has further involved matters by transferring his affections from Acropolistis to Telestis, with the result that the spectator scarcely understands who is in love with whom; second, there is a double confusion of identity, since Telestis resides in the home of her father under the name of Acropolistis and Acopolistis as Telestis; and the final drams to weigh down the scale of perplexity are the lies of the slave

from whom the comedy takes its name. The interest of such plays, from which the audience derives the same rather spurious delight as from puzzles in unravelling the entanglement, is analogous to that of detective stories. The dramatic appeal is of a low order, as compared to the sterner and nobler attractions of an exquisitely wrought plot, a profound sympathy with human character, the stimulation through the action of the spectators' finer sensibilities, the inculcation of a wholesome moral lesson, or Aristophanic invention; and, as the detective story finds its fondest patronage in the jaded mind, so the complicated plot marks a debased condition of the theatre. The difference may be illustrated by a comparison of the great tragedies of Corneille's early period with those of his latter days, when having drained himself dry, he relied for success upon such involution and had acquired so degraded a conception of the drama that he himself boasted that the *Héraclius* could not be comprehended without a second reading.

The plots of Menander are by no means pure comedy. The underlying motive, the separation of two lovers, is usually rather serious, because they have true affection for each other; this, of course, is the theme of all the New Comedy, and yet the passion is often not of the same deep nature as in the *Epitrepontes* and *Periceiomene* but rather a mere caprice, which may be used without incongruity as a hinge for humorous situations. Often others are involved in the sorrow caused by the separation, especially, as in the *Georgus*, the mother of the wronged maiden. There is little in Menander of the farcical, in which Philemon must have excelled, if we may judge from the *Mercator* and the *Mostellaria*, two of Plautus's most comical plays. In the former the young Charinus has brought back, from his trading expedition to Rhodes, the fair Pasicompsa, pretending that she is to be a servant of his mother; but his dissolute old father Demipho, becoming enamoured of her at first sight, alleges that she is too pretty for such an office, insists that she be sold, and, in order that he may secretly consort with her, slyly has his friend Lysimachus purchase her and take her home. Many very diverting complications are thus produced. Pasicompsa, on coming to the house of Lysimachus, in a belief that she has been bought for Charinus, indulges in an encomium upon him as a young, true, and handsome lover, while Lysimachus understands her words to refer to the withered roué, Demipho. The wife of Lysi-

machus, jumping at the conclusion on her return that her husband has obtained Pasicompsa for his own delectation, falls into a towering passion in a scene which attains a climax at the appearance upon the stage of a cook and scullions to prepare a symposium which the wife thinks Lysimachus to have ordered. The whole comedy is similar to a modern French farce with domestic difficulties of a "risqué" nature. The *Moscellaria* is cast in an analogous mould. The comic situation is created by Theopropides's surprise of his son and his son's friend, dissipating with their mistresses, and the ludicrous measures taken by Tranio, who is among the cleverest of Plautine slaves, to prevent the father from learning the unpleasant truth. He first frightens Theopropides from his house, in which the debauch is taking place, by declaring that it is haunted; caught in a new trap by a banker's arrival to demand the interest on the money borrowed by the son for liberating his mistress, Tranio, the prototype of Corneille's *Menteur*, leaps at another lie, pretending that the youth has obtained the sum to buy the house of a neighbor Simo; driven into another corner by the desire of Theopropides to inspect the purchase, he gets permission from Simo and very humorously conducts his old master through the house under the delusion that it is his own; a final "screaming" situation is developed when Theopropides, crediting the tales with which Tranio has regaled him, is confronted with the slave of his son's comrade in vice and recounts these prevarications as gospel truth to the bewildered fellow, who knows the actual condition of affairs. That Plautus himself, and Philemon, if the Latin is faithful to the Greek, relished the extremely diverting farce of this play, is indicated by Tranio's taunt to Theopropides at the end:

"Si amicus Diphilo aut Philemoni es,  
dicito is quo pacto tuo' te servos ludificauerit:  
optumas frustrationes dederis in comoediis."<sup>1</sup>

If Leo rightly reads the names Diphilus and Philemon in the somewhat doubtful text of the first line, then the former also would seem to have had a reputation as a composer of farces; and indeed the *Clerumenoe*, reflected in the *Casina*,<sup>2</sup> is in the rollicking mode of Philemon with even some common horseplay when the two slaves of the litigants cudgel

<sup>1</sup> 1149-1151.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. below, p. 137.

each other about for apparently no other reason than to gratify the vulgar part of the audience. The element of horseplay would constitute another ground for assigning the *Asinaria* to *Diphilus*,<sup>1</sup> since the son is obliged by a slave to perform the most humiliating pranks for the amusement of the rabble in order to obtain the money for his mistress.<sup>2</sup>

Menander, as far as he is known, does not write in this vein. The *Bacchides*, if it is his, is the nearest approach, because of its lightness of tone, but it contains no such side-splitting situations as those that I have just outlined. Capps denominates the *Samia* as a farcical comedy,<sup>3</sup> but, as it seems to me, with unstable arguments. The whole atmosphere of the play is distinctly serious, almost sad; and the only detail that might possibly be interpreted as farcical, though its results are disastrous, is Demeas's assumption that the infant which Chrysis fondles is her own; Capps arrives at his conception partly by unnecessarily imagining the existence of another infant with which Moschion's child is confused. Perhaps because of his aversion to sheer farce as well as because of his subtlety<sup>4</sup> Menander did not enjoy during his lifetime the popularity of his rival Philemon; and it is in a serene consciousness of his own real and enduring superiority to his rival's baser appeal and courting of the crowd that in the anecdote of Aulus Gellius<sup>5</sup> he says: "Thy pardon, Philemon, but tell me, when thou winnest the victory, dost thou not blush?"

The recovery of a portion of Menander's work reveals in him a greater profundity and sincerity of feeling than had hitherto been suspected. A corollary of the more practical philosophy of life prevalent in the fourth and third centuries is the almost total lack of sentiment betrayed in the great majority of comedies which reflect this life. Love, to be sure, is the dominant motive of all New Comedy, but it is usually love which approaches mere sensual passion and from which are largely absent romance and poetry, or, in a word, that vague thing called sentiment, which elevates human love above that of the beasts which perish. The modern is shocked, too, by the slighness of family affection. The faithlessness of husband to wife is an everyday affair and is contemplated with indifference; even when the marriage vows are not broken, there

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. III, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> III, 3.

<sup>3</sup> E. Capps, *Four Plays of Menander*, p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. below, p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> 17, 4, 2.

is little or no tenderness between the pair. Parental affection runs at a low ebb. The exposure of children is a common and unchallenged custom; the father receives his long-lost daughters, as in the *Poenulus*, with no show of warmth. The absence of feeling does not necessarily imply that Hellenic emotions were any less poignant than our own, for in the *Poenulus*, the father has spent his life in searching for his stolen offspring; it means only that they were not voiced in the literature. That chaste restraint, which is the most precious legacy of the Greeks to future ages, led them scrupulously to avoid in art of every kind false and sensational sentiment, or sentimentality. The freedom from mawkish emotion constitutes the noblest quality of Periclean literature; and the coldness of the New Comedy, which, in its abhorrence of sentimentality, goes too far and excludes even legitimate sentiment, is only the vice of a virtue. Our modern theatre has proved convincingly that of the two evils of excessive or defective sentiment the latter is by all means to be preferred: an extreme instance is Faversham's production of *Julius Caesar*, which, in an appeal to the craving for emotionalism and in a desire to provide an affecting conclusion for the second act, audaciously violates Shakspeare's text by admitting Calpurnia to the Senate House to wail over her husband's body. The new plays of Menander are in this respect less rigid. In the *Hero*, even a character that usually is singularly obtuse to human feeling, a slave, has so unselfish a love that he is willing to take upon himself the blame for his sweetheart's unfortunate condition. Charisius in the *Epitrepontes* is so desperate at the loss of his bride Pamphila that he seeks to forget his sorrow in an unwonted round of dissipation. In the *Samia* Moschion, loath to be parted from Plangon and to break the troth that he has plighted her, denies himself the vengeance upon his father of eschewing Athens and seeking his fortune in the wars. It is more than mere animal passion that makes Polemon in the *Periceitromene* cry out in an agony of sorrow for her who is in all essentials his wife:<sup>1</sup>

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι

λέγω, μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα, πλὴν ἀπάγξομαι.

Γλυκέρα με καταλέλοιπε, καταλέλοιπέ με

Γλυκέρα.

<sup>1</sup> 254-257; the numbering is that of Körte's text in the Teubner edition.

It is possible that if more original Greek comedies are discovered, we shall find that the other poets were not so heartless as the adaptations of the more stoical Romans would suggest.

A final deterrent to the appreciation of these comic plots is the low moral standard. The sturdiness of the race that had beaten back the waves of oriental invasion at Marathon and at Salamis had been weakened. The supreme culture of the Periclean age had come, but, like all culture, it enervated the nation that it civilized. It carried in its skirts and left in its trail degeneration. Hellas of the fourth and third centuries is to be compared to Italy of the Cinquecento and Secento, decadent after the great cultural achievements of the Renaissance. The Athenians, having lost their lofty code of ethics, are content if the superficialities of life are artistic and pleasant, caring little what vice lurks behind. Aestheticism, as always after a great period, is substituted for morality. This laxity is best reflected in contemporary comedy. Aristophanes, of course, reeks with the foulest indecency, but it is like the smell of the rustic sod from which Old Comedy had sprung. It is the rugged and boisterous indecency of stalwart men, one of the many outlets to the superfluous energy of the fifth century, and amidst all this coarseness there had always shone a certain idealism. Aristophanes had always set before himself some noble purpose, such as the amelioration of the state or a return to the upright days of the Persian Wars, and with all his license and vulgarity he had never for a moment forgotten his high mission. The New Comedy has no such ideal; it is satisfied merely to amuse. There is, indeed, dimly to be discerned, a certain semblance of an ideal, which Menander and his fellows accept and would wish their audiences to follow, a mild application of the old precept, *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, combined with an aversion for the irrational. The underlying motive in these principles of moderation and of common sense is not purely ethical, but rather aesthetic; extremes and absurdities are to be avoided because they mar the elegance and beauty of existence. Culture and good taste have become the touchstones of conduct. Menander himself, in the interesting passage of the *Epitrepontes* which reveals the influence of Epicurus, his schoolmate, strikingly sets forth this attitude by defining vice as abnormality and ignorance.<sup>1</sup> The words *νοῦς* and *λογισμός*, as the ultimate courts of

<sup>1</sup> 559: *ποῶν μηδὲν ἄτοπον μηδ' ἀμαθές*.

appeal, re-echo through his verses as "raison" through French literature of the seventeenth century, and might almost be spelled with a capital letter :

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδέν, πάτερ, ἐν ἀνθρώπου φύσει  
μείζον λογισμοῦ τῷ διαθέσθαι πράγματα.<sup>1</sup>  
ὁ νοῦς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἔστιν ἐν ἐκάστῳ θεός.<sup>2</sup>

The comic writer inculcates these principles when he exhibits how those who violate them are punished, — the misers, the ill-tempered or superstitious, the fathers who err too far on the side of severity or indulgence, the youths who fail through stupidity or dissipation. But such a vague and general philosophy of life is not to be compared with the high and specific lessons that Aristophanes embodied in his plays ; and it is only implicit in the works of the New Comedy, not plainly and definitely stated, and could have been gleaned only by those who had ears to hear. Those many fragments that frankly preach Epicureanism might seem negations of the shadowy ideal that I have indicated. There can be no doubt that the doctrines of Epicurus were the most popular of the time and the most readily followed. The real gospel of Epicurus, however, was not a reckless search for pleasure, but a search restricted within such bounds of mental and physical health that it in no wise conflicted with the lenient interpretations of λογισμός and σωφροσύνη. Many even at that day, of course, found it easier to misconceive Epicureanism as mere sensuality, and this lower form of the philosophy also sometimes expressed itself in the contemporary drama.

Now for the plain speech of Aristophanes, which would have shocked the tender sensibilities of the elegant Athenian of the fourth century, are substituted the much more insidious covert jest and the noxious suggestiveness that characterize modern French comedy. Profligacy and prostitution are taken as matters of course and encounter no real reprobation. Truth and honor fall prey to artful slaves or courtesans for the diversion of the spectators. The scapegrace son is victorious over his honest father. Many examples may be noted in the course of this study ; one of the worst of all is the *Truculentus*, in which a harlot

<sup>1</sup> Kock, 247.

<sup>2</sup> Kock, 762.



receives and drains of their resources three different lovers, and instead of being humiliated, is in the end triumphant. The closest analogy is the polite but festering Restoration Comedy ensuing upon the rough but wholesome drama of the Elizabethan era.

## II. *The Manipulation of the Plots*

How were these monotonous and intricate plots treated? Before approaching this division of our subject, it is necessary to note one great extraneous influence which had come to play upon the genre, that of tragedy, and particularly of tragedy as modified by Euripides, who in the fourth century was still the most popular dramatic poet and who himself had brought the literary type in which he composed closer to comedy by approximating it to everyday life.

Whether through the influence of more serious drama or because of the general spirit of the ancient theatre, comedy begins at the same point in a given imbroglia as tragedy.<sup>1</sup> Both the comic and tragic poet represent before the eyes of the spectators only the outcome of a situation, whereas the modern playwright usually, though, because of the spell which Ibsen has cast over all forms of contemporaneous drama, not always, depicts to the audience its beginning, development, and culmination. To express the condition in terms of the formula, the  $\frac{x - y}{z}$  section, or the division of the couple, is already a fact, and the action of the play consists only in the operation of the term  $w$ , the method of obviating the impediment. With a few slight and negligible exceptions, a New Comedy, properly speaking, is nought but a dénouement. The ancient writer is thus immediately confronted with a more difficult problem of exposition than the modern: the latter has to explain only the relations of the several characters and can trust to the action itself to exhibit those complications in which he purposes to entangle them; the former has to explain as much plus the complications in which the characters are already entangled before the opening of the play. In addition he usually has to reckon with a more involved mesh of circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. my articles on Aeschylus, *Harvard Studies in Class. Phil.*, 1905, pp. 17 ff., and on Sophocles, *ibid.*, 1912, p. 115.

One of the means that he adopts to meet the problem of exposition is the Euripidean prologue, which may have entered comedy in the Middle period, first by way of parody, of which there are several examples in the fragments of Antiphanes<sup>1</sup> and Eubulus.<sup>2</sup> We need not debate the knotty question whether the prologue, as employed by Euripides, was a superfluous accretion to tragedy for the display of rhetorical dexterity; in any case, it proved invaluable to comedy for the exposition of plots which are often so involved that the action would be unintelligible unless preceded by this clear and straightforward statement of antecedent events, disassociated from the body of the play. If the prologues of Plautus may be used as criteria for the Greek originals, they did not often go further than such a statement. Euripides has been accused of using the prologue to give a short résumé of what is to happen in the drama itself, but as a matter of fact, he is guilty of this aesthetic blemish almost as seldom as the New Comedy. That the prologue was taken over from tragedy only in order to solve the difficult problem of exposition is indicated by Plautus's omission of it where little elucidation is required. The meagre plot of the possibly Menandrian *Stichus* precludes a prologue; there is none for the *Mostellaria*, possibly derived from Philemon, because the audience need to be informed only of a son's dissipation in his father's absence, or for the *Persa*, because the audience need to know only of the slave's passion. The prologue of the *Pseudolus* consists merely of a little persiflage, since the exposition has to relate only a youth's intrigue with a courtesan, who is about to be sold to a military officer; the prologue of the *Asinaria*, the plot of which is similar, reveals little more than the name of the play and the Greek source. The only surprise in Plautus is the *Epidicus*, in which the intricate nature of the plot would arouse expectation of a prologue that does not exist. The prologues of Terence afford no basis of judgment for the Greek prototypes, in that they discuss his contests with rivals and general literary conditions but disclose little or nothing of the plot. The excessive complication of Terence's comedies render this procedure all the more astounding; he dared to adopt the more natural modern mode of exposition within the action itself probably because with his defter hand he felt himself cap-

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. Kock, 18, 73, 191.<sup>2</sup> Ed. Kock, 10.

able of managing it better than the ruder Plautus. Except in so far as the Plautine norm may be taken as evidence, it is impossible to determine with any certainty the usage of Menander. In the one extant prologue of the *Periceiomene*, the preceding circumstances are revealed and the vaguest kind of a hint at a happy dénouement is vouchsafed. A passage from Machon, quoted by Athenaeus,<sup>1</sup> may be interpreted so as to suggest that Diphilus at least introduced personal satire into this portion of the play, which thus would have absorbed some of the elements of the old parabasis, but it is possible that, unlike Terence, he also made an exposition at this point. As the vigor died out of comedy and in the third century gave place to literary virtuosity, the composers of prologues indulged themselves in alphabetic acrostics and verses that read the same from the beginning or from the end of the line.<sup>2</sup>

In Menander and in the other poets of the period they are often spoken, as in Euripides, by divinities that play no other rôle in the action. Sometimes it is one of the regular deities: the tutelary god of the household in the *Hero* of Menander and in the probably Menandrian *Aulularia*, the stellar god Arcturus in the *Rudens*, Dionysius, Eros, and Aphrodite, in anonymous papyrus fragments.<sup>3</sup> Frequently it is an appropriate allegorical deity: Misapprehension in the *Periceiomene*, who personifies the obscurity as to the truth in which the characters are involved; Elenchus or Scrutiny in a lost play of Menander;<sup>4</sup> Auxilium or Help, in the possibly Menandrian *Cistellaria*, personifying the assistance to the heroine in the discovery of her parents; in a play of Philemon,<sup>5</sup> Air, which, like Anaximenes, he makes the

<sup>1</sup> 579 e-580 g. Christ (*Gesch. der griech. Lit.*, vol. II, p. 28, n. 4) so understands the passage; but the actual verses say no more than that Diphilus somewhere in his comedies used personal satire and that his prologues were cold, and there is not necessarily any connection between the two statements.

<sup>2</sup> For example, cf. the prologues published by P. Jouguet, *Bull. de corr. hell.*, 30, 1906, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> G. Kaibel, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1899, pp. 549 ff.; P. Jouguet, *op. cit.* The beginning of the short St. Petersburg fragment of Menander's *Phasma* seems to be a part of the prologue, possibly a dialogue between two deities. Nicolau de Olmer, in his elaborate edition of the new Menander (*El teatro de Menandro*, Barcelona, 1911-12), supposes, on what seems to me insufficient evidence, the opening section of the *Samia* to be from the prologue.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *Pseudolog.* 4; cf. Kock, *frg.* 545.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly the *Philosophi*.

primal element, and therefore omnipresent and cognizant of all things;<sup>1</sup> Luxury and Poverty engaged in a dialogue in the *Trinummus* and therefore probably in the *Thesaurus* of Philemon; Fear in a lost and anonymous comedy mentioned by Sextus Empiricus;<sup>2</sup> Wisdom in the *Sella* of Afranius.<sup>3</sup>

But the formal prologue does not suffice for the double exposition of characters and entanglement which falls to the lot of the ancient dramatist; to insure clarity, there is within the play itself, again upon the precedent of Euripides, a repetition of the exegesis already given by the prologue, though often not so explicit, so that the condition of affairs would not be plain without the prologue for an introduction. In the *Captivi*, to take a typical instance, immediately after the elaborate prologue, the parasite Ergasilus reiterates what the spectators have already been told about the unhappy state of the bereft father, Hegio.

Menander seems frequently to have modified the normal method of exposition. He employed the Euripidean prologue; but conscious of its stilted nature, and unwilling to frustrate at the very beginning the impression of realism, he first brought upon the stage two or more characters, who through dialogue revealed the situation in part or in whole, and he transposed the prologue to the second place in order to recapitulate or sometimes also to add new information. Occasionally, to assist in the opening expository dialogue, was introduced a person who had no vital connection with the plot and did not appear again and who was therefore styled an introductory character or a *πρόσωπον προτατικόν*.<sup>4</sup> There are two examples in the extant work of Menander and one in a possibly Plautine adaptation. The *Hero* begins with a conversation between the slaves Davus and Geta, the latter probably a protatic character, in which it is explained that Davus is in love and wishes to marry Plangon, for whose embarrassing condition he will assume the responsibility, and that the master Laches is about to return and bring matters in the household to a crisis. Here our text stops, but inasmuch as Davus knows little more of the antecedents of the plot, there

<sup>1</sup> *Vita Arati*, II, 438; cf. Kock, frg. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Kock, frg. ades., 154.

<sup>3</sup> Ribbeck, *Afranius*, 299.

<sup>4</sup> The phraseology is derived from Donatus's comment upon the prologue of the *Andria*, in which a drama is divided into *πρόπαισις*, *ἐπιπαισις*, and *καταστροφή*.

must have been forthwith revealed in a prologue by the family god or Hero the involved story of Plangon's and her brother's exposure and their subsequent vicissitudes up to the time of the play. The preserved fragments of the *Periceirromene*, the first part of which is lost, begin with the prologue by \**Ayvoia* or Misapprehension, who relates the early history of Glycera and her brother and her quarrel with her lover Polemon. Since there is no mention of his clipping of her hair, it is to be surmised that there was reference to this episode in the lost introduction; and since by the manner in which allusion is made to them in the extant verses, it is evident that Polemon, his servant, Sosias, and Glycera had already appeared upon the stage, the quarrel must actually have taken place in this scene or at least have been described. The loss of one part of the exposition in both these comedies renders it impossible to determine how far details of information were recapitulated. If the *Cistellaria* may be assigned to Menander, the completeness of the text places the critic in a better position. It is learned in the initiatory dialogue of the procuress and the poverty-stricken heroine, Silenium, that she is not an ordinary prostitute but the mistress of one lover, Alcesimarchus, who has promised to wed her but is being coerced by his father into another marriage. There ensues a soliloquy of the procuress, who reiterates these facts and goes on to declare that she had picked up Silenium as an exposed infant and consigned her to Melaenis to bring up as a daughter. Then comes the prologue in the mouth of Auxilium or the God of Help. The author betrays his consciousness of the repetition of the exegesis, in that he causes Auxilium to state that the loquacity of the procuress has left little to be said; but Help first recapitulates the whole story of Silenium, so that of some details there is a threefold exposition, then proceeds to add what is known only to supernatural powers, the actual parentage of the girl, and concludes with an account of her father's life. A comparison of these three introductions illustrates what is probably Menander's general method. He allows one group of characters to reveal what they themselves know, and he relegates to the formal prologue what information lies only in the minds of another character or group of characters, as in the *Hero*, the liaison of Phidias and Plangon, of which the slaves are probably not cognizant, or as in the *Cistellaria*, the checkered matrimonial career of the father. In the *Miles Gloriosus*, the original of which is not known, the pro-

logue by the slave Palaestrio is in the same place, but there is a variation from the standard of Menander in that the exposition is not divided between a god and human beings and in that the first scene is used, not for a statement of facts, but merely for sketching the boastful and conceited character of the typical captain, Pyrgopolinices, through a dialogue with the protatic parasite, Artotrogus. Of the other possibly Menandrian comedies of Plautus, the *Aulularia* and the *Poenulus* have the prologue in the first place, the *Stichus* needs none, and the text of the opening portions of the *Bacchides* is in so sad a condition that no conclusion may be drawn.<sup>1</sup> Terence's prologues are so largely his own that nothing can be divined as to the Menandrian precedent; and the fragments of Menander preserved through quotations by ancient writers are exasperatingly silent. It is not difficult to guess why Menander sometimes, at least, may have resorted to the method which I have outlined: since human personalities are more interesting than allegorical abstractions or the frigid deities of fourth century religion, and since conversation mirrors actuality better than the stereotyped soliloquy of the prologue, he preferred to open the play with dialogue, realizing that success often depends upon the first impression.

In his desire for realism he goes even further and seeks to alleviate somewhat the formality of the expository soliloquy by finding for it a natural justification. In a fragment from the exposition of the *Epicleurus*,<sup>2</sup> the speaker apologizes that sleep has made him talkative; the procuress at the beginning of the *Cistellaria* seeks indulgence for her chatter by the excuse of a full stomach.

Besides the prologue, the New Comedy appropriated from Euripides, its most inveterate and cleverest manipulator, the ἀναγνώρισις.<sup>3</sup> It is safe to assert that mutual recognition between relatives long lost and unknown to one another is an important factor in an overwhelming

<sup>1</sup> The existing prologue to this comedy is in all probability spurious.

<sup>2</sup> Kock, 164.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Clifford H. Moore has called my attention to an apposite passage in the newly discovered life of Euripides by Satyrus: "... reversals of fortune, violations of virgins, substitutions of children, recognitions by means of rings and necklaces. For these are the things which comprise the New Comedy and were brought to perfection by Euripides." Cf. *Oxyr. Pap.* IX, p. 149, fr. 39, col. VII, and p. 176; cf. also F. Leo, *Göt. Nachr.*, 1912, p. 281.

majority of the comedies about which we possess any information, especially in the work of Menander. Common forms are a man's discovery of a woman whom he had violated, or a parent's discovery of a child who had been kidnapped or exposed; in the former case, the ignorance on the part of the man is often due, as in the *Epitrepontes*, to the befogged frenzy of the nocturnal religious celebration, or vigil (*παινυχίς*), amidst which the episode has occurred. The scenes are as long drawn out and as cluttered with tokens of recognition (*γνωρίσματα*) as in the tragedies of Euripides. The Cairo manuscript luckily offers an excellent example in the *Periceiomene*. Capps so pieces out the badly shattered lines of a part of this scene as to represent Pataecus proving his identity to his daughter Glycera by naming one after the other the trinkets, which, as was customary, had been deposited with her, when as a baby she had been abandoned, just as Ion, in Euripides's drama of that name, challenges his mother to recount the tokens which she had laid with him. But Capp's reconstruction is merely hypothetical, and the only certainty is that the recognition is managed by a series of *γνωρίσματα*. The *Rudens*, however, does present a kind of analogy to the *Ion*. Daemones recognizes his daughter Palaestra through hearing her name the contents of a casket of tokens in order to prove her ownership to the fisherman who has extracted it from the sea. In the *Poenulus*, after a long scene of recognition, the identity is clinched, much as in the *Electra* of Euripides, by a scar. In the *Curculio*, a brother and sister discover each other through two rings, one possessed by each.

There are other isolated instances in which Menander plainly reflects the influence of Euripides. The whole plot of the *Epitrepontes* may very well have been suggested by the lost *Auge*, if the theory of Willamowitz<sup>1</sup> that the substance of the tragedy is given by the account of Auge in Moses Chorenensis is correct: in both a maiden was violated at a religious festival and at the time tore from her unknown assailant a ring; in both she unjustly suffered for her misfortune; and in both the recognition of the guilty man and the extrication from the difficulty were achieved through a ring. The parallelism passes into actual quotation

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<sup>1</sup> *Anal. Eur.*, p. 189. Van Leeuwen, in his edition of Menander, points out the analogy to the *Epitrepontes* (p. 13, n. 4).

when the nurse Sophrona uses in extenuation of the youthful indiscretion the same typically casuistical Euripidean excuse as Heracles in his apology for the rape of Auge :

ἡ φύσις ἐβούλεθ', ἡ νόμων οὐδὲν μέλει ·  
γυνὴ ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷδ' ἔφν.<sup>1</sup>

There is even a more striking parallelism between the arbitration scene of the same comedy and a part of the lost *Alope*, the plot of which is related by Hyginus :<sup>2</sup> in both a shepherd consigned to a friend an exposed child whom he had found, but without relinquishing the *γνωρίσματα* ; in both, disputing about the possession of these, with a fine irony, they chance to call as arbitrator the man who is unwittingly the child's maternal grandfather. Another indication that Menander was to a certain extent modelling his *Epitrepontes* upon the *Alope* is the subsequent use, as one of the tokens, of half of the maiden's chiton,<sup>3</sup> the factor that plays so important a rôle in the corresponding tragedy. The obsession of the fourth century for Euripides is revealed by the fact that the comic poets can still resort for humor to a parody of passages from his works, although, when the Middle gave place to the New Comedy, the custom of burlesquing a whole tragedy was generally abandoned.

Other details are occasionally transferred from tragedy to comedy, such as, for the sake of arousing suspense, the dream foreshadowing the dénouement.<sup>4</sup> In the *Rudens*, the father foresees in an enigmatical vision the rescue of his daughter ; a very similar dream is employed for a similar purpose in the *Mercator*.

Irony also is frequently employed in Menander and the poets of the New Comedy. This quality is usually conceived as the ignorance on the part of one or more characters of a fact of which the audience are cognizant ; but Mr. G. G. Sedgewick, in a very convincing dissertation upon the subject to be submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at this University, a part of which I have had the pleasure of reading, champions the theory that the irony, in order to be dramatic, must involve a conflict of wills with circumstances. Some critics think of irony as confined to

<sup>1</sup> *Epitrepontes*, 583-584.

<sup>2</sup> *Fab.* 187.

<sup>3</sup> *V.* 187.

<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the dream in tragedy I have discussed in my article on the *Dramatic Art of Sophocles*, pp. 118-119.



language, discerning it only when a character uses in one sense words which apply to the unknown fact in another; concrete expression, of course, renders the irony all the more vivid, but there may be an implicit irony in a mere situation. In the scene that gives the *Epitrepontes* its title, Smicrines is ignorant that he is the grandfather of the infant as arbitrator for whose *γνωρίσματα* he is called upon to do service. The irony does not find expression in words, and a conflict may be implied, in that he unwittingly acts against what he conceives as his own advantage, for his decision is a link in the chain that leads to the discovery of the child's real parentage and the consequent reconciliation between husband and wife, with the result that he loses his daughter's dowry, which he is so greedy to reclaim. In Menander's *Adelphi*, as adapted by Terence, there is a wealth of irony in Demea's ascription to Micio's ward of the vices of which his own is guilty; the conflict is obvious, and the irony reaches its climax at the end of the fourth act just before the revelation when Demea bursts into a series of exclamations against the misdeeds of the youth whose character he does not know that he himself has formed. The very essence of the *Captivi*, like that of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* in tragedy, is ironical, since a youth Tyndarus is prisoner and slave in his own father's house in Aetolia, and both are unadvised of the fact. Here the irony often becomes more tangible by passing into language. In the second scene of the second act, Tyndarus, pretending that he is a freeborn Elean, unconsciously declares to his father the reality:

"Tam ego fui ante liber quam gnatus tuos."<sup>1</sup>

Again in the third scene of the same act, the father Hegio remarks, not knowing that his son is in his own house:

"Meus mihi, suos quoique carus."<sup>2</sup>

Or, to mention one more of many possible examples, in the fourth scene of the third act, Tyndarus reiterates that he was not born a slave in Elis, believing that he is simulating what he does not know to be the truth about his birth in Aetolia:

"*Hc.* Fuistin liber? *Tyn.* Fui."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 310.

<sup>2</sup> 400.

<sup>3</sup> 628.

I have spoken of a possible reminiscence of the parabasis in the prologues of Diphilus; it was inevitable that some relics of the Old Comedy should linger on in the New. The concluding triumphal revels of the successful party in the struggle which is always enshrined in a work of Aristophanes are often repeated in the last act of a New Comedy. At the end of the *Periceironene*, for instance, a double marriage is gaily celebrated. The rejoicing, however, in accordance with the general low moral tone of later comedy, has frequently a much more ignoble cause than the victory of a political or ethical principle in a play of Aristophanes. If the *Δις ἑκαταῶν* of Menander is the source of the *Bacchides*, then it will have to be acknowledged that our poet has composed perhaps the most disgraceful conclusion in the whole range of ancient comedy to what was already a thoroughly indecent work: the victory is the acquisition of his mistress by the youth Mnesilochus through tricking his father, and finally the two old men, who have been deceived by their sons, are themselves enticed by the two courtesans into joining the orgy. It is often the triumph of unscrupulous dealings. In the *Persa*, the licentious slave Toxilus celebrates his outwitting of a procurer; in the *Pseudolus*, for an analogous reason, there is at the end a drunken debauch, in which again the father consents to participate.

It is partly to afford an opportunity for a concluding revel that a New Comedy is almost invariably set at the time of a religious or domestic festival. Another reason is the desire for a logical pretext to introduce a chorus, who thus may become participants in the merry-making. Very commonly, the play is set at a Dionysiac or Aphrodisiac celebration, when between the acts a company of devotees, though they have no more intimate connection with the plot, may appear and perform that simple function to which the chorus now in the course of time had been limited, the entertainment of the audience by short interludes of dancing and singing, for which no lines are written in the manuscript; such settings are the last reminiscences of the origin of comedy in the Bacchic comus. At other times, as probably in the *Samia*, throughout the comedy preparation is being made for a marriage, as guests at which a chorus is justified; perhaps in this case, if we follow the principle of Clayton Hamilton<sup>1</sup> in explaining all factors

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<sup>1</sup> *The Theory of the Theater*, New York, 1910.

of the drama by the requirements of the contemporary stage, we might say that it is the exigency of a chorus that produces one of the most usual elements in the plot, the wish of a father to bring about a marriage to which the son is opposed. In the *Epitrepontes* the personnel of the chorus is the group invited to the banquet which Charisius in his pique gives for his new mistress, Habrotonon; in the *Periceirromene* it is likewise a party of boon-companions whom Polemon has gathered for a breakfast to forget his sorrows.

Despite the intricacy of plot in the New Comedy, the unity of action is usually observed. Nothing extraneous to the development towards a dénouement is admitted. There are, to be sure, tediously long sententious passages, commonly soliloquies, assigned especially to characters entering upon the stage,<sup>1</sup> but the reflections are at least provoked by the dramatic situation. The unities of time and place are more strictly kept than in Old Comedy or in tragedy. The *Heautontimorumenus* appears to be the only extant work that comprises even two days. The *Captivi* might seem an exception, since in the course of the action there takes place a journey from Aetolia to Elis and back, but the poet, jumping from the frying-pan into the fire, avoids the difficulty by committing the improbability, for which he has been censured by Lessing, of presuming the travel to occupy only a few hours. The problem of the unity of place was simplified in two ways. By common consent, the open place represented on the stage, usually a street or square before two dwellings, was supposed to cover a larger space than it actually did and to include more obstacles to the vision than actually appeared, so that two or more characters could be present simultaneously without discerning one another; and secondly, by convention, conversations that should be held within doors were allowed in the more public thoroughfare, or the vestibule or πρόθυρον was considered as the inside of a house. The restriction of the unity of place, however, was often injurious to dramatic effect in causing many important interior scenes, which ought to be enacted before the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Thesaurus* of Philemon, if the *Trinummus* follows it closely, must in this respect have been an appalling bore, and if anything is to be concluded from the number of extracts that he afforded to the anthology of Stobaeus, his work in general must have been overburdened with moralizing.

audience, to be reported, on the precedent of tragedy, by a kind of *ἐξάγγελος*.

As far as the scant material permits judgment, Menander was probably not so guilty of loose construction as is Diphilus in the two Plautine adaptations of the *Rudens* and the *Casina*, both of which break asunder in the middle. In the former, one dilemma, the rescue of the maidens from the leno, is solved in the first three acts; and in the last two, a new motive, the recognition of Palaestra as the daughter of Daemones, to which, to be sure, there has been some slight previous allusion, is introduced and solved. The conclusion to the *Rudens*, moreover, though the blemish perhaps did not mar the original of Diphilus, is unsatisfactory, since the fate of the other girl and her lover is left unexplained. The *Casina* falls into three pieces. By the end of the second act, the shameless dispute between father and son about the possession of the courtesan has been decided in favor of the latter by the casting of lots; but since, in order that the play shall not stop, the old scapegrace has to be represented as persisting in his intentions despite his defeat, in the third act a new scheme is concocted to forestall him, the feigned madness of the woman; and acts four and five move on to another stratagem for the same purpose, the disguise of a slave as the courtesan, who soundly trounces the father's minion. The proper way to treat either of these plots would be to combine the different motives from the beginning and to carry them throughout the comedy. Philemon also handles badly the plot of the *Thesaurus*. The return of Charmides really solves the difficulties that his absence has occasioned in his household and with his friend Callicles; but in order to pad out the play to the traditional size, there is inserted a new complication with a sharper, which is of no assistance in effecting the dénouement.

Of the extant works of Menander, the *Samia* alone seems to have something of the defective structure that is a fault of Diphilus. By the end of the second act, where our text ceases, the problem has been virtually solved; the innocence of the heroine, Chrysis, has been established, and both fathers, informed of the intrigue of Moschion and Plangon, are anxious for their marriage. A short final act would have sufficed for rounding off the play, but in order to lengthen it out to the conventional number of five acts, the third introduces a new complication, Moschion's pretence of running away to the wars in order to

punish his father for false suspicions. The Latin imitations, however, contain some offences against structure, though not so heinous as those of Diphilus. In the *Adelphi*, though all motives are carried to the end of the play, the love of Aeschinus for Pamphila is not introduced until the third act. There is pleonasm in the plot of the *Poenulus*, for the successful scheme to rescue Adelphasium from the hands of the procurer has eventually no effect upon the dénouement, which actually occurs by an ἀναγνώρισις. Donatus constantly adverts to Terence's correction of improbabilities in Menander, as at the conclusion of the *Adelphi*, where Micio is married off to the old widow Sostrata, with no objections in the original Greek, but only after remonstrances in the Latin. The scene of the *Cistellaria*<sup>1</sup> in which Lampadiscus lays bare to a strange woman the most intimate secrets of the family shows that other incongruities are not far to seek. Another defect that may be gleaned from the comment of Donatus is Menander's frequent resort to the soliloquy and messenger's speech instead of the more truly dramatic media of dialogue and action. At the end of the third act of the *Eunuchus*, where the story of Chaerea's amorous escapade is revealed through a lively conversation with his friend Antipho, in the original there was merely a soliloquy. If inferior in structure, Diphilus may at least have been superior in movement to Menander, for Ihne<sup>2</sup> suspects that the reason for Terence's taking the first part of the *Adelphi* from the former's *Synapothnescontes* was that there the music-girl's abduction was represented on the stage, whereas in the latter's *Adelphi* it was merely related.

If, since the papyrus fragments are so mutilated, one may judge from the adaptations of Plautus and Terence, Menander and his contemporaries have not yet completely mastered the division into acts, which has taken the place of the old episodes and syzygies. The acts are likely to be inordinately long or short, not forming perfect entities. The fifth acts are particularly awkward: they are either too long, as in the *Poenulus*, including too much of the dénouement, or they are unnecessary, as in the *Cistellaria*, simply dragging it out.

The psychological motives are subtler in Menander than in his rivals, sometimes, perhaps, even too slight to constitute a logical basis for the

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<sup>1</sup> II, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Quaest. Terent., p. 32.

action. All the complications in the *Periceirromene* rest upon Glyceria's scruples about revealing her brother's identity, lest it should prove detrimental to his career. The *Bacchides*, at the end of the first act, exhibits a very nice bit of motivation, where, with an excellent psychological understanding of human perversity, the youth Pistoclerus is represented as goaded on to love, rather than deterred, by the sage remonstrances of his mentor. Much of the motivation in the *Andria* is so refined as to be unconvincing. Pamphilus, though in the bonds of the courtesan, Glycerium, is being forced into a marriage, which, however, Chremes, the bride's father, on learning of the liaison, rejects. The subtlety begins when Simo, the father of Pamphilus, in order to test the condition of his son's heart, pretends that the day is set for the nuptials. It becomes deeper when Davus, the youth's slave, thinking that in any event Chremes will persist in his refusal, persuades his charge, for the sake of forestalling any suspicions of a connection with Glycerium, to simulate acquiescence in the marriage that Simo desires. The very abyss of subtlety is reached when Simo, now thoroughly deluded into a belief in his son's innocence, denies credence to the tale that the infant of which Glycerium is delivered is his grandchild and is confirmed in his denial by the prevarication of Davus, until he conceives the whole matter a plot on the courtesan's part to hold Pamphilus within her toils and avert the marriage. All the development here is mental, depending upon the most delicate varying psychological attitudes, which, in Menander, took the place of the simpler, ruder motives and more boisterous action in the other poets, and together with his refusal to appeal to the crowd through farce, militated against his popularity. He could have been properly valued only by the highly cultured among his audience; his fame was largely posthumous, because there was always in his works something of the closet-drama, which was better appreciated by later men of letters in the careful persual of the study.

### III. *Characterization*

The delineation of character in Menander and his compeers can be understood only when brought into relation with their cultural environment. The tragic poets of the fifth century had exhausted what to the Greeks was the romantic sphere, mythology. Jaded with

such production, the source of which had been drained dry, the Athenian public now turned naturally to actual life and to an examination of the types of human beings that they encountered in their regular routine. Just as in the sixteenth century the burlesques of Folengo in Italy and of Cervantes in Spain rang the knell of the chivalric material, so the marked increase of mythological travesty in the Middle Comedy demonstrates that any serious interest in the gods and demi-gods as affording dramatic subjects is dead. Romanticism and idealism give way to realism and rationalism. Tragedy, the substance of which is idealistic, had held the field in the preceding century, but even here a change is discernible in the last of the great triad, Euripides; now comedy has the cry, not, however, Aristophanic comedy with rollicking play of fantasy and the grotesque, with many allegorical or supernatural figures, but comedy the substance of which is realistic and drawn from ordinary existence.

Another force, besides realism, made for this study of character. The individualism that enters Hellenic life with full force in the Periclean age is now in the fourth century much increased, and reflected in all spheres of activity. The works of Praxiteles reveal more than those of Phidias the study of a specific model; the poets of the New Comedy interest themselves in personality more than Aristophanes. In tragedy, psychological analysis had reached its apogee with Sophocles; but it does not attain any decided proportions in comedy, which from the first had lagged behind and followed the lead of tragedy, until the fourth century. Greek individualism, however, stops at a certain point and does not go beyond the study of types. The whole tendency of Greek art is to generalize, to study the beauty of different parts of the body in many models and then to fuse them together into one ideal form. Praxiteles represents more of the individual than his predecessors, but he does not, like the sculptors of the Renaissance, study the specific member of a class. His Satyr stands for the class of which Michelangelo's Bacchus is a single member; his Hermes is the type of the noble youth, the David of Michelangelo is almost a portrait. Likewise the comic poet evolves the crafty slave, but creates no such crafty individual, with peculiar traits of his own, as Shakspeare's Iago. We get in the *Aulularia* the typical miser, but nowhere so highly diverting and eccentric a member of the class as Boffin in Dickens's *Mutual*

*Friend.* There appear many generalized courtesans, but there is no such study of particular and varied specimens as one finds in the sensitive temperament of a Camille, the passionate jealousy of a Zaza, or the morbid eroticism of Daudet's Sappho. It was the ordinary, not the extraordinary in nature, to which the poets of the New Comedy wished to hold up the mirror. The types represented, moreover, are confined within a rather narrow circle, and there is no excursus into the unexplored field of characters such as the languid Jacques of *As You Like It* or the sentimental Duke of *Twelfth Night*, who do not conform to any of the established classes.

Rarely the type, in the modern manner, is somewhat individualized. The young hero of the *Miles Gloriosus* has an only too uncommon consideration for the old man who aids him in his amour. Plautus, in the *Persa*, sketches with manifest delight the playful and *spirituel* nature of the slave-boy, Paegnium. The benevolent elderly sister in the possibly Menandrian *Aulularia* strikes a new note. For it is Menander who appears especially to have excelled in this individualization.<sup>1</sup> Polemon in the *Periceirromene* is not the usual braggart soldier, but has the simple and honest heart, which with us is the traditional connotation of the uniform.<sup>2</sup> Moschion in the *Samia* is not a colorless youth, but has a most ticklish sense of honor and a romantic desire to teach his father a lesson by absconding and making his own way in foreign wars. Most interesting in this respect is his delineation of courtesans. Menander does not make them the utterly neutral machines or the astute and unscrupulous schemers that they so often appear in the New Comedy, but, perhaps with the example before him of his own Glycera, whose faithfulness Alciphron so charmingly depicts,<sup>3</sup> he is lenient toward the class, bestowing upon them graces of character and kindnesses of heart that

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<sup>1</sup> Capps, however, in his introductions to the several plays seems to me often to read too much individuality into Menander's characters; the interpretation of the personality of Onesimus in the *Epitrepontes* (pp. 27-28), for instance, is especially farfetched and not justified by the extant text.

<sup>2</sup> The adjective *σοβαρός*, which is the Greek equivalent of the Latin *gloriosus*, is, to be sure, applied to him (52); but it is not used here in the sense of *braggart* but rather of *violent*, in relation to the jealous fit in which he has cut off Glycera's hair. Nor is this violence a usual trait of his, for Misapprehension in the prologue expressly declares that he is not such by nature (44-45).

<sup>3</sup> 4, 19, 5.



he denies to their more respectable sisters. *Mutatis mutandis* he may be considered the same kind of apologist for the demi-monde as Dumas with his *Camille* or as so many of the ultra-moderns, who, with the general tendency of this extravagant age, have taken a hyperbolical view of the question and carried their rehabilitations to absurd extremes. An eminent instance is the attractive figure of Habrotonon in the *Epitrepointes*, coerced into a life of impurity from which she seeks release, imbued with a truly maternal love for a baby not her own, assuming the sin of another woman, whom naturally she might have hated as a rival, in order to benefit her and to discover the infant's parentage, and yet endowed with the wit and liveliness of her profession. Another example is Thais of Terence's *Eunuchus*, though it is hard to determine to which of the two Menandrian plots that coalesce in this play she belongs. Reflecting, it may be, traits of her namesake, another of Menander's flames, despite her love for Phaedria she wishes to sacrifice herself for three days to the captain Thraso, whom she despises, in order, as remuneration, to get possession of the young Pamphila, who she has learned is really of free parentage. One thinks also of those Hetaerae, who possibly have some ground for their nobler conduct in their better birth, of which they themselves, however, are ignorant: Silenium of the *Cistellaria*, forced into her position, like Habrotonon, but restricting herself to one admirer, whose feelings, even though she believes him untrue, she hesitates at wounding, Adelphasium of the *Poenulus*, graced with modesty in the midst of her degradation and voicing a certain ethic to be observed even in the practice of her trade:<sup>1</sup>

"I find no envy, sister, in my frame,  
And a good disposition far prefer  
To gold: for gold's the gift of fortune: goodness  
Of disposition, is the gift of nature.  
Rather than wealth, may I be bless'd with virtue.  
O, modesty becomes us more than scarlet;  
And is a brighter ornament than gold.  
Bad manners soil the finest dress, e'en worse  
Than dirt; but virtuous ones, do by their deeds,  
Brighten the foulest."

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<sup>1</sup> I, 3, Thornton's translation.

#### IV. The Dialogue

The distinction of the New Comedy was its brilliant dialogue, and it was here that Menander excelled. The language is admirably adapted to the character of the speakers. When they are boors, the lines are crammed with colloquialisms, with explanations loosely thrown in at random, with the natural tautology of the uneducated, as in the arbitration scene of the *Epitrepontes*, where the vulgarity of diction is all the more striking because placed in the setting of attempts at pompous legal pleas. Yet this vulgarity is only comparative. In the fourth century, when for the past hundred years the study of rhetoric had been at work eliminating all uncouthness, some degree of urbanity marked even the rudest conversations; and in Menander's dialogues between persons of higher social position, the sentences are as nicely constructed and as delicately turned as in the most exquisite French. Smicrines, the arbitrator, also speaks with terse, sharp ejaculations that harmonize exactly with his sullen temperament. The recovery of this play demonstrates that Menander was especially skilled in mimicking oratory, when he found it necessary to suit such a style to his interlocutors. In the famous debate about the trinkets, like a clever advocate, he is able to assume the standpoint of either party and to argue speciously on each side. Another good instance of the persuasiveness of his arguments is afforded by a fragment of the *Dyscolus*, in which a son pleads with his niggardly father for a proper use of wealth.<sup>1</sup> Quintilian praises Menander expressly for his oratorical ability,<sup>2</sup> a trait which in the halcyon days of Hellenic eloquence it was natural should be transplanted to New Comedy, particularly when this genre was so vitally influenced by the rhetorical Euripides.

The same scene in the *Epitrepontes*, to the many excellencies of which I have often had occasion to refer, reveals Menander as a past master of dramatic repetition. Davus ejaculates again and again the phrases, *δεινὴ γ' ἡ κρίσις, ἃ πέπονθα, τί γὰρ μετεδίδουν*; and each time, as the case goes more and more against him, with renewed significance and increased comic effect. In another famous scene of litigation, written by a greater poet than Menander, there is a consummate but closely analogous use of the same device in the reiterations: "A Daniel come to

<sup>1</sup> Kock, 128.

<sup>2</sup> 10, 1, 69.

judgment, a second Daniel, O wise judge, O noble judge, O upright judge, O learned judge, etc." Even though no new meaning accrues, a line which is in itself comic may acquire additional force by discreet repetition. So Smicrines twice falls into the mock-legal formula :

(Σμ.) ἰδέον, Σύρισκ' ; (Σν.) ἔγωγε<sup>1</sup>

(Σμ.) ἐπόεις ταῦτ' ; (Σν.) ἐπόουν<sup>2</sup>

But Syrisus finally turns the tables on him by beginning himself :

(Σν.) εἶρηκεν ; (Σμ.) οὐκ ἤκουσας ; εἶρηκεν.<sup>3</sup>

Menander realized, furthermore, that the language of drama, since it is written rather to be heard than read, must make its points on the spur of the moment, and therefore must be livelier than ordinary prose or verse. Although, perhaps, he indulges too much in monologues,<sup>4</sup> when he does employ dialogue, it is of the most spirited nature. A brilliant example is the scene with which the *Hero* opens. Aulus Gellius compares the admirable vividness of the slave's outcries at his young mistress's disgrace in the *Plocion* to the sluggishness of Caecilius's Latin adaptation : "He is variously agitated by fear, anger, suspicion, pity, and sorrow. All these emotions and passions of his mind are in the Greek painted with extreme and perspicuous acuteness. But in Cæcilus these are very dull, and destitute of all dignity and grace."<sup>5</sup> But to achieve an instantaneous impression, the dialogue must not only be bright in coloring, it must sparkle ; and thus it is that so large a part of dramatic criticism directs its attention to the presence or absence of wit. Croiset catalogues a number of typically scintillating passages.<sup>6</sup> To these I add two or three in which Menander is clever in imbuing with freshness the tritest themes. The *Arrephorus* must have been distinguished by this virtue : in one excerpt he designates matrimony as a perilous sea in which, not three out of thirty, but all ships are lost ;<sup>7</sup> in another he describes the loquacious Myrtille as more resonant than the brass of Dodona, which tintillates at a single touch all day, because she does not cease even at night.<sup>8</sup> His wit was his inalienable possession from the very first, for in the comedy with which he began his theatrical career, the *Orge*, he

<sup>1</sup> 53.

<sup>2</sup> 57.

<sup>3</sup> 76.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. above, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> 2, 23, 15, Beloe's translation.

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. de la Litt. grec.*, vol. III, pp. 626-628.

<sup>7</sup> Kock, 65.

<sup>8</sup> Kock, 66.

enlivened the commonplace of the parasite's rapacity by representing him, in his anxiety to get to the feast betimes, as arising in the night and calculating the hour by the moon's shadow on the dial.<sup>1</sup>

All this liveliness and sparkle, nevertheless, would have gone for little, if any obscurity or roughness of style had prevented a ready comprehension on the part of the audience. Plutarch, in the essay in which he contrasts Menander's culture with what he conceives as the rudeness of Aristophanes, discussing the delight that the former gives not only in the theater but also for leisurely reading and for recitation at symposiums, avers that he achieved everything "with especial grace" (μετὰ χαρίτων μάλιστα), having in mind, doubtless, the lack of effort and easy flow of Menander's verses.<sup>2</sup> And so we have come to the real secret of his high reputation in antiquity. The discovery of the papyrus fragments has not, as was expected, decreased our esteem of the Roman imitators in regard to plot and invention; but rather it has confirmed us in our estimate of what indeed we might already have surmised from the passages quoted by ancient writers to be the essence of his genius. Menander's refined nature did, to be sure, disdain the farcical appeal of some of his contemporaries, his motivation rests upon subtler psychological analysis, and his characters have more personality than the puppets that walk the boards in much of the New Comedy; but his true superiority rests upon the more cultured form of wit that the French designate as *esprit*, upon elegance, facility, and sprightliness of language. Preëminently a Greek, he excels in those very qualities which always lend charm to the most insignificant literary products of Hellas, which were always less possible to the heavier Roman mind and the more cumbrous Latin tongue, and especially, despite the more advanced stylistic art of Terence, to that mind and that tongue in their as yet inchoate condition of the second century before Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Kock, 364.

<sup>2</sup> *Aristoph. et Menandri Comparatio*, 3 A.